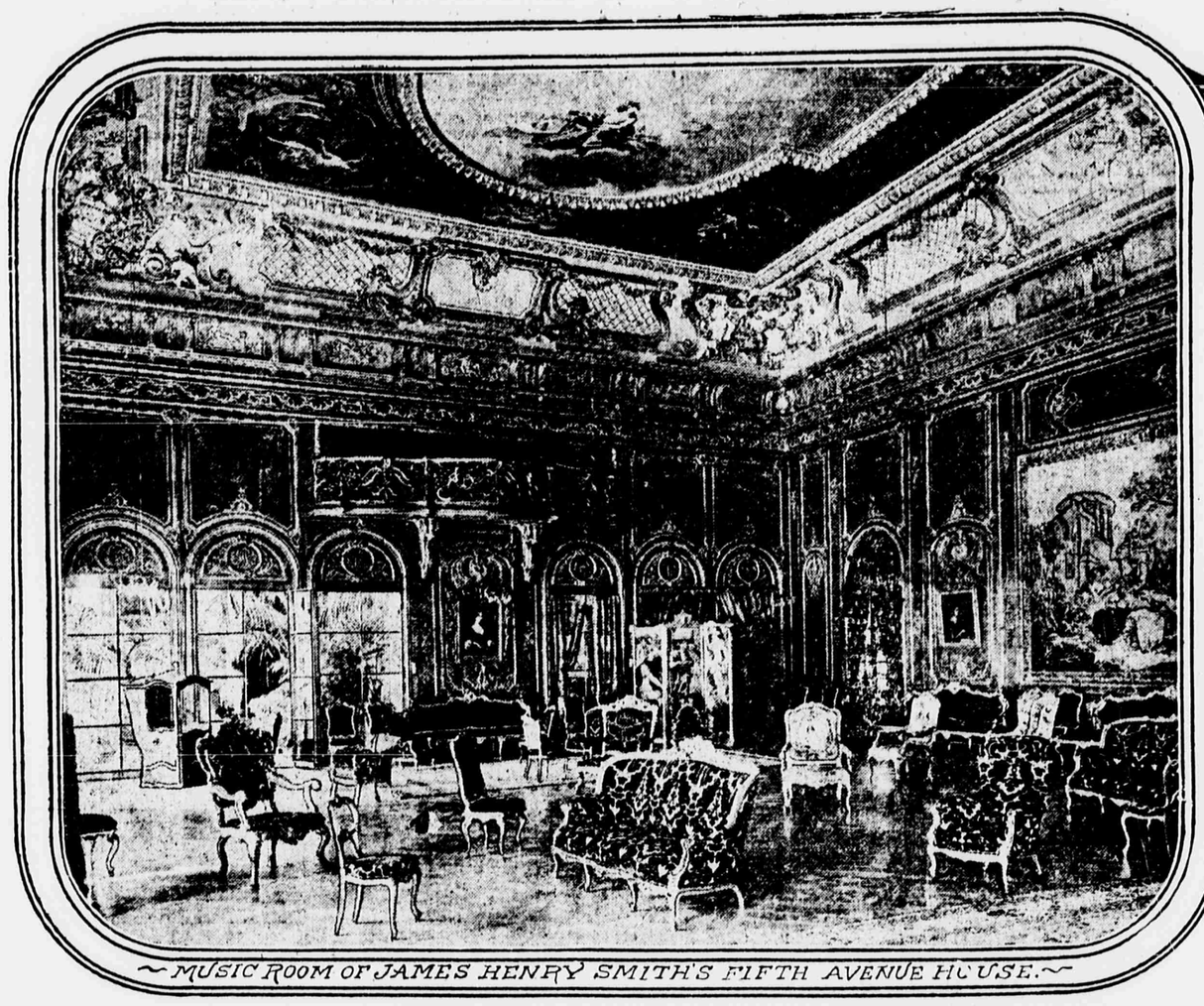
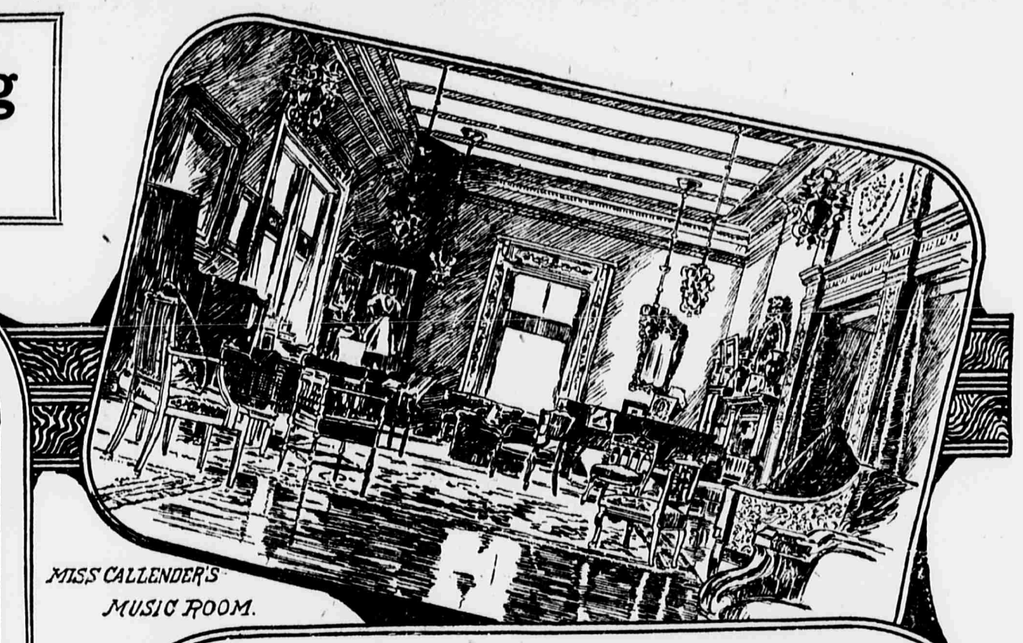
Musicales a Costly Way of Entertaining

Great Prices Paid the Artists—Some Fine Music Rooms in New York Homes



~MUSIC ROOM OF JAMES HENRY SMITH'S FIFTH AVENUE HOUSE.~



MISS CALLENDER'S MUSIC ROOM.

~MUSIC ROOM AT W. D. SLOANE'S.~

Music plays an increasingly important part in New York society. It is not enough to sit in the parterre three times a week and hear the great singers, one must have artists to entertain in one's own houses. Nothing is smarter than a musicale with the most famous and high priced singers.

The engagement of the great instrumentalists would be more comprehensible, since society rarely goes to Carnegie Hall. So Kubelik, Pugno and Gerardy are more novel than the artists from the opera house. But there are always musicales at which these artists sing, and the more they cost the more brilliant the party is likely to be.

There are various ways in which to arrange a musicale. Usually the hostess allows the principal singer to put on the programme the numbers she wants. Then the other artists follow. In such cases the pianist who is engaged as accompanist usually arranges the programme. Some hostesses write Mr. Conried that they have a lump sum to spend and want, say, $3,000 worth of singers.

One young man in New York society is frequently called in by hostesses who want to arrange a musicale attractively. A very successful drawing room impresario who has made a fortune in giving private concerts is sometimes engaged to arrange the entire programme.

There are some hostesses who take delight in looking after every detail themselves, but they are not numerous.

So in the majority of cases the woman giving a musicale merely decides on the prima donna she wants. From this point on her concern is merely with the list of guests, the supper and other more material details of the affair. Hostesses have been known to allow a prima donna to sing what she wants while intimating as strongly as they dare to such an important personage the color of the gown she should wear.

"Tell her to sing that thing out of 'Traviata,'" the hostess will say to the pianist who may be attending to the musical part of the evening. "You know the one I mean. That one that goes up high and has lots of trills in it."

One hostess who wanted a high soprano to sing "Oh, Promise Me," and was furious because she refused, then suggested "The Rosary" as a substitute. When the singer balked at that the hostess was so indignant that she wanted to call the party off altogether. The prima donna, who had been very patient up to that point, then told her it was a humiliation for any artist to sing in her house. But she took the $2,500 after the concert, nevertheless.

The hostess has to be polite to the singer, even if she is to be so well paid for her work. She must meet the prima donna when she arrives and escort her to the dressing room. Then she must see that she is properly entertained at supper. Throughout the evening she must be careful of her comfort and attentive to her. Then the matter of payment must be delicately handled. A check is usually sent to the singer or her husband if she be engaged outright. Otherwise it is forwarded to her manager, or if the artists are engaged from the opera, to Mr. Conried.

It was not a great many years ago that a very rich hostess here failed to acquaint herself with the right way of paying an American prima donna. She had the butler hand the young woman a check on a silver waiter just as she was preparing to leave the room.

There was a metallic sound, a flash of light through the rose colored gloom of the drawing room, a flutter of white paper through the air, and the sharp sound of a silver waiter striking an exposed surface of the polished floor. Then the indignant singer, with a flash of fire at her hostess, swept out of the room. There was great astonishment on the faces of all that witnessed the scene, and that hostess never gave another musicale so long as she lived in New York.

As if it were not enough to pay the singers more than they receive in the opera house, some hostesses buy them handsome presents in addition to their fees. One prima donna last year got a gold purse costing $500 in addition to $2,500 for singing less than half an hour.

All of the singers charge a large advance for singing in private houses over what they receive at the opera. Thus Mme. Sembrich and Signor Caruso demand $2,500 for singing at a musicale, although they do not get that much from Mr. Conried for a whole evening's work. Yet, in spite of all the inducements to sing in private houses, the singers hate to do it.

They, above all, hate to have any part in an evening entertainment at which they are not the principal feature. When they come in to sing for a lot of guests after dinner, they would all charge double prices if they could.

One soprano who was not an operatic celebrity, but had a great vogue at one time here, guaranteed to sing three songs for $200 after a dinner. She was to go on to another party afterward. The guests applauded so enthusiastically that the singer was compelled to sing six instead of three songs. This delay made it impossible for her to keep all of her engagements at the other houses. She demanded an extra $200 for the second three songs. The hostess refused to pay on the ground that she had not told her to sing any more and that she need not have done it. The singer brought suit on the ground that the hostess had also applauded and had thereby indorsed what her guests did. The suit was settled out of court, but the soprano got her money.

Another suit grew out of the engagement of a very high class quartet to play at a house in New York. They were engaged to arrive at a certain hour. The guests were still at dinner. It was evident that they were likely to remain at the table for some time. So the host sent out word for them to play in the butler's pantry or in the hall, where they could be heard well at the dinner table.

It would have taken a brass band to drown the laughing and chatter at that table. The host added that he didn't care for any classical music that evening, but would prefer the intermezzo from "Cavalleria Rusticana" or something from "Faust." As the repertoire of this quartet consists chiefly of Beethoven, Mozart and Brahms, the consternation of the distinguished players was great. They discussed their treatment and went home.

They could not recover their bill until they brought suit. They got the money then, as the quartette was too dignified an institution for the man to treat in such a way without making himself ridiculous.

There are several houses in New York in which there are regular concerts during the winter. Some of these are subscription affairs at which all the guests pay. Others are invitation and the hearers are invited guests.

It has naturally come about that New Yorkers who can afford the luxury have added music rooms to their houses. The three shown here belong to J. Henry Smith, Mrs. W. D. Sloane and Miss Callender and Miss de Forest.

Mr. Smith's house was built by the late William C. Whitney, who ordered his architects to make it as fine a specimen of Italian renaissance as they could. The cost was for the first floor alone more than $1,000,000. Mr. Whitney said after it was completed that he would never have given such a commission had he realized what the cost was to be.

The music room was an exception to the prevailing style of the house and is a fine specimen of Louis XVI. French decoration. The walls were brought from France and put up here. The woodwork is dark brown, trimmed with gold and the hangings are maroon. At one end of the room stands a pipe organ, which was put there for Herman Hans Wetzer, who used to look after Mr. Whitney's music for him.

"Nobody was ever so princely in his musical entertainments as Mr. Whitney," said a manager the other day, "and he never haggled over price, or seemed to think of it at all. He said: 'I want Paderewski to-morrow night,' or 'I want Sembrich,' or 'I want Ternina.' Then Mr. Wetzler had only to notify the artist. There was never any suspicion of bargaining. The artists were always glad to accept, and the result of such liberality was a most brilliant season of musicales. They always took place on Sundays and were usually gotten up only a few days in advance of the date."

J. Henry Smith had Signor Caruso sing in his music room this year and Mme. Nordica took part in one of his musicales. He gave another last week. His guests were more numerous last season than Mr. Whitney's used to be.

The big music room that belongs to Miss Callender and Miss de Forest is on the corner of the Tiffany Building, at Seventy-second street and Madison avenue. They have occupied this apartment ever since the building was completed. This is more genuinely a music room than many others of greater magnificence. Here all of the great singers who are intimate friends of Miss Callender and Miss de Forest come to visit them.

Miss Callender and Miss de Forest give every Sunday for two months of the year informal musicales to which their friends are invited. Here the hostesses usually present the younger American singers and musicians.

It was in this room that Miss Callender gave a benefit for Emma Eames when that young singer had just begun her career at the Metropolitan. Here Mmes. Sembrich and Nordica and Jean de Reszke have been frequent visitors. Miss Callender and Miss de Forest have always been known as especially intimate friends of Mme. Eames, who spent one winter in their house. Several portraits of her hang in this music room—all of them painted by Julian Story, the husband of the singer.

Here are signed photographs with affectionate messages from Lilli Lehmann, Christine Nilsson and the great singers of an earlier day.

Mrs. Sloane's musicales are remarkable for their elegance and for the high quality of the music heard there. Few guests, in view of the size of the room, are invited. There always seems room for as many more as are there. These musicales are always planned by a young man in society who has so much taste and information on the subject that he is in constant demand for such duties. Mrs. Sloane usually gives two musicales every winter. The programmes last winter are characteristic of the style in which they are planned. At the first of the two Mme. Sembrich sang, Josef Hofmann played the piano and Fritz Kreisler played the violin. The three united in a rendering of Mozart's "Il Re Pastore."

At the second concert Mme. Eames and Josef Hofmann were the soloists, and Victor Herbert conducted a string orchestra. Mme. Eames sang with the orchestra the third act aria from "Tosca." Such musicales are aristocratic in their personnel and arrangement. They require, of course, unlimited means by which to get the best singers and a visiting list worthy of such artists, and a beautiful room.

SUPERSTITIONS YET THE RULE

UP TO DATE NEW YORK MOVED BY ALL KINDS OF NOTIONS.

Doctors Depressed by Hearses—Lawyer Encouraged by a Rabbit's Foot—Common Superstitions—President Hunter's View of It—Old Beliefs Still Held.

When a few weeks ago the statue of a former New York Mayor fell while being raised to its niche on the new Hall of Records and was smashed to bits on the sidewalk some persons familiar with the statue's history immediately declared that the thing has been pursued by a hoodoo from the start. They pointed out how from the mixing of the first handful of clay disappointments, hindrances and setbacks of all sorts had been the sculptor's lot.

Most of the people to whom the tale of the hoodoo was told accepted it as a reasonable explanation of the mishap to the statue, which proves, as an unimaginative lawyer pointed out, that even in the first city of practical, modern America and at this highly advanced stage of civilization people are about as superstitious as they were in the Middle Ages.

"Perhaps we don't believe in witches any more," said the lawyer, "but I should not be afraid to wager that it would be mighty hard work to find a man or a woman in New York who does not harbor some one superstition by which he or she is more or less influenced."

"Are you influenced by any one superstition?" the lawyer was asked.

"Yes. Truth compels me to confess I carry a rabbit's foot. The rabbit was caught in a graveyard at the full of the moon, and were I to lose my rabbit's foot I would feel mighty blue. At any rate I should certainly try to replace it, for the reason that I have had no bad luck since I carried the thing in my trousers pocket."

"And before then?"

"Before then I had no end of bad luck," and the lawyer laughed a trifle shamefacedly.

"But surely——"

"I know exactly what you are going to say. I have heard it all before from persons who don't possess a rabbit's foot, and I can't for the life of me give an answer which doesn't sound foolish. Nevertheless, I keep my lucky piece, as I call it.

"My wife used to guy me unmercifully until in a lucky moment I discovered that she herself had a particular superstition, which is this: Under no circumstances will she cross the street in front of or between carriages of a funeral procession. Since then I haven't been jollied so much at home about my rabbit's foot.

"In my opinion artists and professional men are quite as superstitious as the rest of us."

"It is a hopeless task almost to reason with the average man or woman who believes that when a dog bites a person the dog must immediately be killed in order to prevent hydrophobia from developing in the person bitten," said Dr. Edward Wallace Lee, apropos of the superstitions of matter-of-fact New Yorkers. "There are thousands of persons who believe that very thing.

"To explain that killing the dog has no effect one way or the other on the development or prevention of hydrophobia is a waste of breath. As well try to persuade some residents of the South that the will-o'-the-wisp is not of supernatural origin and an omen of good or ill.

"And that other foolish superstition about a dog or dogs howling just before a death in the neighborhood; there is no use in trying to explain that phenomenon by natural causes either. Persons who believe in this superstition always fail to observe that dogs often practice nocturnal howlings when no one is at the the point of death, but just as soon as any one is taken very ill and the dogs yelp the connection to their minds is obvious.

"Why, there are lots of superstitions left in scientific medicine even, and, take them as a class, physicians are not above superstitions themselves. One day I was walking with a young doctor, on his way to see a very sick patient, when a hearse hove into view.

"'A bad omen, doctor,' he said, with a doleful shake of the head.

"Yes, he found his patient dying. Since then I have heard of many doctors who acknowledge that it depresses them to meet a hearse when on their way to see a very sick patient or to perform an operation.

"Speaking of operations, I have never had a patient who was willing to have one performed on a Friday. No matter how great the need the operation must be put off till Saturday if the patient has his way. This is particularly the case with women.

"Doctors of course bump up against all sorts of superstitions when making the rounds of their patients. For instance there are men who believe, as they believe the Gospels, the wearing a common iron ring on the second finger of either hand will make them immune to certain ills. Every third day they carefully wipe from the inside of this ring a rusty deposit, which they imagine the ring has drawn from their body.

"Other persons never fail to carry a horse chestnut about with them as a preventive of certain other ills. I have met people who would use only cranberry poultices for inflammation of the bowels, laying the stress not on the heat of the poultice but on the color of it.

"Another superstition less prevalent now than it was a few years ago is that the skin of a black cat laid on the bowels is almost a sure cure for inflammation. Like the recipe for hare soup, you must first catch your cat, kill it—preferably at midnight—skin immediately and apply the skin warm to the patient.

"And it is almost folly, even in these days, to tell most women that a frog or a lizard absolutely cannot live in the human stomach. No wise doctor attempts to convince a patient of that fact. He simply goes to work to remove the tenant, which his patient knows is there.

"Most modern superstitions are merely a survival of old ideas, and the reason they still flourish is that few persons are sufficiently well educated and intelligent to throw them off. No intelligent and well educated person will entertain a superstition. An intelligent person who is not well educated may do so, or a well educated person who is not particularly intelligent; but not a person who is both intelligent and well educated."

President Hunter of the Normal College does not agree with this view.

"I am inclined to think," said he, "that the most superstitious classes are the highly educated and the very ignorant, and that the most superstitious persons are those who do solitary work in lonely places, like sailors, fishermen and miners.

"Men of profound learning, men of brilliant mind and intelligence, have been notoriously superstitious, Dr. Samuel Johnson, for instance, who never was able to pass a railing without touching every spike. Not to touch every spike meant ill luck for him, he thought. And the great Napoleon was one of the most superstitious of men.

"Bringing superstition up to date, take the baseball players, one-third of whom at least are college men. I can think of no class of men more superstitious.

"Invariably each team has a mascot, and when ill luck befalls their play some one among the onlookers has hoodooed them, they say.

"I am acquainted with a woman who is at the head of a flourishing New York school—a woman of sound education and fine intelligence—who is superstitious to an extent which makes her relatives lose patience with her sometimes. She can't be persuaded to start a journey on a Friday, not even to a weekend party at Lakewood or some other nearby place. She will start on Thursday or Saturday, or not at all.

"If when starting on an unaccustomed route she meets a red headed woman her pleasure is spoiled, because to her mind meeting a red headed woman when starting on a journey portends disaster. If possible she will turn back and postpone her journey till the next day.

"The trouble she takes to steer clear of the number 13 is almost laughable.

"Other well educated women I have known were made quite miserable by the breaking of a mirror by one of their family, or by the falling of a portrait from the wall.

"Nor do I think superstitions always a survival of old ideas—at least not consciously. Some persons have original superstitions.

"For example, when a boy of 9 I used to walk twice a day, sometimes oftener, over a piece of road as long as an avenue block, which was paved irregularly with blocks of flagging about one yard long. Between the blocks of flagging were spaces of a foot or so of earth and cobblestones.

"Step on the earth? Not I. I took the greatest care, I remember, to step from one flag stone to another without touching the gap between. I did not do this for fun. I was firmly convinced, for no reason I can explain, that to step off the flagging would surely bring me bad luck, and I never once in passing over that stretch of road took any chances.

"No one suggested this idea to me, nor did I tell any one of my superstition. Judge of my surprise when, some years later, I read that Boswell had been affected in his youth with the same superstition.

"Even in large cities where superstitions are less likely to be fostered than in the country there are few persons, I think, who have not at some time in their lives entertained a superstition of some sort. The reason for it? Who can tell?"

FASHIONS IN FUR OVERCOATS.

ONE GARMENT FOR WHICH $5,000 MAY BE SPENT.

Only Three or Four Varieties of Skins Used by Well Dressed Men—Sable the Most Costly, but by No Means the Best Wearing—Astrakhan a Popular Material.

A fur lined overcoat is always a luxury, but it never was more so than this year, when there has been so little severe weather. If it were only for utility that men bought these coats, there would be little demand for them.

Furs for men have become like furs for women, a luxury in no way dependent on the temperature. A man who makes an effort to be well dressed feels that his wardrobe is incomplete without a fur lined coat. If there is anything to be said in excuse for such an extravagance it is the lasting qualities of such a garment. A well made fur lined coat ought with ordinary care to last at least ten years.

The most important question with this kind of a coat is naturally the fur of which it is to be made. And that depends in a large measure on the amount one expects to pay. Russian sable is naturally the most expensive of all furs. That varies so much in price that a coat of this kind may cost $800 or $5,000.

Astrakhan is a popular fur, but it does not wear so well as other kinds, and the astrakhan collars do not give the furry effect that is both becoming and comfortable in cold weather. Then the fur is likely to get shiny with comparatively little wear. A coat lined with astrakhan and furnished with a mink or sable collar is a very becoming combination. There is a beautiful fur for collars in sea otter, which is rather too costly to become common.

The supply of furs from which men may select coats is not large. Woman wear sable, mink, lynx, seal, black and silver fox, astrakhan, broad tail, chinchilla, wolf and various other furs while the choice of men for street wear is practically limited to astrakhan, seal, mink, sable or otter.

For wear in a motor, however, the man may select from a variety of pelts that were never before heard of as intended for human wear. They come, moreover, in combinations and contrasts of color that would delight the most barbaric taste.

The cheap fur coat is a very poor investment for anybody. The shiny, dyed furs look well for the shop windows, but they will not stand closer scrutiny. They do not wear at all well and fur coats of this kind do not come into consideration in discussing the kind of a coat that a well dressed man would want to wear.

Most of the best fur coats are made now by tailors, although some are turned out by furriers. In some cases the purchaser after ordering his coat buys the fur from a dealer and takes it to his tailor. Most careful men want their overcoats, even if they are to be made of fur, made by the man who cuts their other clothes.

The cloth used in making a fur coat should be black, whatever the kind or color of the fur used. Kersey or broadcloth is the best material. The length of a coat may be left to the individual taste of the wearer, but the best style is almost to the shoe tops.

There are no buttons on the fur coats made by the best of the New York tailors. Small wooden buttons covered with silk and silk loops are used to fasten the coats down the front. Otherwise the coat is absolutely plain. The sleeves as a rule are not provided with cuffs. Fur is worn as a cuff only when it is part of a sleeve, made very long, so that it may be turned down over the hands in cold weather. When this protection is not needed the sleeve is turned back and gives the effect of cuffs made of the fur with which the coat is lined.

The fur with which the coat is lined shows along the edge, but it is the collar that really gives the decorative fur effect to the garment. As a rule the shawl collar is worn because it can be more readily turned up about the ears. The notch collar is occasionally worn, and in the opinion of some persons is much smarter than the shawl collar.

The skins used to make a coat collar are in every case much finer in quality than those that line the body of the coat. In the case of mink, it is desirable to select an especially good set of skins for the collar, as it alone will show. The difference in the quality of astrakhan is not really so noticeable as the finest skins, used for women's wear, would not be required.

Sealskin, which is very expensive, makes a beautiful lining, but would not be desired for a collar. A mink, otter or astrakhan collar, however, goes admirably with this fur.

In the same way a sable collar may be used with any sort of lining. A suggestion of sable about a coat, however, immediately takes it out of the list of useful garments. Sable is an extremely perishable fur, for one thing, and not suited to the wear of any man who has to work, as the majority of Americans do, and expects to wear his fur coat even to business in cold weather.

A good mink coat, made up by the highest priced tailor may be bought for $600, and with care it will last for ten years. A good astrakhan coat lined throughout with fur of good quality may be bought for $400, and it will be first class in every detail of cut and finish.

The fur overcoat follows generally the lines of the ordinary coat, save that it is fuller in the back, with more of a box effect and much broader about the bottom.

GREEN TURTLES EXPENSIVE.

Where They Are Caught and How They Are Brought North.

From the New Orleans Times-Democrat.

"The flesh of the green turtle often brings $50 a pound," said an oyster dealer. "This rich meat comes to us from the coral reefs of the West Indies.

"The turtles are caught in nets among the rocks. They are very carefully brought north. They are deck passengers at first, but as the weather grows cold with the ship's progress they are penned in warm rooms below—regular staterooms.

"It's a different treatment that they get, though, at the natives' hands. If a native is bringing turtles north he nails them fast to the deck by their flippers. Strange creatures that they are, they appear to suffer little under such cruel treatment.

"The calipee and calipash are respectively the flesh from the breast and the back of the green turtle, tidbits which, I have heard epicures say, are unequalled in the earth beneath, the heavens above or the waters under the earth. This meat is superlatively rich, delicate and tender.

"Live green turtle fetches, wholesale, from a dime to a quarter a pound. What makes the meat so expensive in the end is that out of a 140 pound fish you'll only get two pounds of calipee and one of calipash.

"Several times when there has been a tight turtle market the chefs of millionaires and of certain extravagant hotels have offered me $1 a pound for live turtle. At that rate your calipee and calipash would come to quite $50 a pound, wouldn't it?"

He led the way to a basement, dark, warm, dry. Here drowsed a number of enormous green turtles, and in several heavy cases lay heaps of what looked like crisp, cream pieces of glue.

"That," said the dealer, "is the finest sun dried turtle meat."

"Do you ever have accidents in handling big turtles?"

"Not often. Last month, though, a 200 pounder bit my foreman's nose off. The fellow has sued me for damages. He claims the turtles ought to be muzzled. He says elevators and dangerous machines have guards, and the muzzles would be the guards of the turtles. But that is nonsense."